MARY,

THE

MAID OF THE INN;

AN INTERESTING NARRATIVE;

DETAILING THE

Singular way she discovered her Lover to be a

ROBBER AND MURDERER;

HIS CONVICTION AND EXECUTION;

WITH

Her forlorn and destitute Wanderings, and unhappy Death.

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MARY,

THE

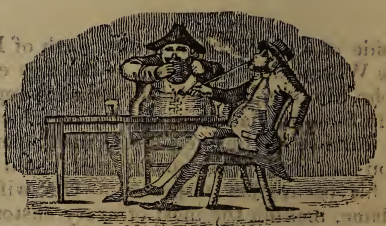
MAID OF THE INN.

By the side of a public road, in the north of England, stood the Wheat-sheaf inn, kept, as the sign expressed it, by John Simpson, a Falstaff in outward appearance. This John Simpson had, from the day on which he was married, carried on business as an innkeeper, with a reputation for every good quality that could make a man of his occupation respected. His wife was a thrifty dame, making the most of every customer, and behaving to them with an overstrained courtesy; while to her husband, Harry the waiter, the hostler, and chambermaid, she was in a continual state of ill-humour, scolding and upbraiding them from morning till night. But the flower of this household, whose attractions were so potent as to draw in the neighbouring swains, to the prejudice of an inn adjacent, was a daughter, named Mary, the only child of this worthy couple.

In height she was rather tall than short; plump, but not stout; and her dress, always arranged with the utmost neatness, was of that make and quality peculiarly adapted to her form. Her bright blue eyes expressed benignity; her features were delicate, small, and well proportioned; and the lily and carnation vied with the tints of her complexion. Her hair in the front was braided with a ribbon, from whence here and there stole a modest curl; and her neck, which was long, and of the whitest alabaster, was in part concealed by a muslin habit-shirt, buckled in front

with a small gold trinket. In her temper, she was open, good-natured, and sportive; whilst no one bore a fairer reputation for modesty and virtue. Her attendance at church had been remarked by the vicar, as well as her devout attention and strict propriety of behaviour whilst in that place of worship.

Such then was Mary, beloved by all who knew her, and deserving of a better fate than the sequel of this narrative unfolds.



The landlord had sat down by the fire, and had just taken a pipe to puff away sorrow, when in bustles his helpmate. 'What! are ye here sotting again?' cried the termagant, 'and there's a room full of customers above, and no one to serve them but I;—and I'm to tramp about the house, and sweat all my strength out, whilst you're sitting down by the kitchen fire, and smoking like a gentleman.—Is this fair, Mr. Simpson, is this fair? What would this house come to if it wasn't for me? There's your *iligant* daughter Moll, a-trapesing with the men in the tap-room, and she's as lazy as yourself, Mr. Simpson; and she'd never budge an inch, if I did'nt force her; and this all comes of your calling the girl handsome, and filling her head with such-like nonsense. D'ye hear me, Simpson? D'ye hear me, I say?'

'Hear ye, Mrs. Simpson!' replied her husband; 'ay, your voice may be heard any hour in the day but let

me alone now, there's a good woman; I've been brewing all the morning, and feel tired.'

'That's your fat, Mr. Simpson,' returned the lady; 'if it was'nt that you eat and drink just ten times as much as another man, you wouldn't be so. Look at me, Mr. Simpson; what is it that makes me so active, but my being so spare?' and, uttering these words, she drew up her figure, which exposed a form every bit as fat as her husband's. But here a loud crash, heard from a room above, put an end to this conference, and directed the eloquence of Mrs. Simpson into another channel.

There's a smash!' she exclaimed, 'there's a smash! and, as sure as salvation, 'tis my *Indy* flower-pot. Moll! you hussy, what is it you have broken now?' (roaring as loud as she could stretch her voice). 'Oh! mother,' replied her daughter, 'indeed it was an accident---indeed it was.'

'Slut!' cried her mother, 'is it the flower-pot?'

''Twas unintentional---indeed it was.'

'Is that answering my question, hussy?---is it the flower-pot?'

'Alack! mother, it is indeed.'

'It is, is it? you hear this, Mr. Simpson! you can hear all this, and yet be unmoved;---and that's my *iligant Indy* jar too, as was made me a present by the captain; but I'll be about her negligence,---a slut! I'll be about her negligence.' Thus saying she shuffled out of the room, swearing at every step; and shortly afterwards, Mary was heard exclaiming,---'Oh, mother! for goodness' sake, don't pull my hair so!---oh, you'll tear it off my head!' and, shortly afterwards, she came running into the room where her father sat, and flew to him for protection. Mrs. Simpson followed, her eyes sparkling rage, and her cheeks glowing like coals.

'Ay, run to your father,' she cried, 'I'll drag you back again, hussy. Mr. Simpson, you encourage her to spite me, you do, you villain! if you had your own way, you'd make her the mistress of the house; but that can't be;---no, thank God, I've too much spirit

for that!' and as she uttered these words, she made a sly blow at her daughter, which the father warded off. 'You'd better be easy, Mrs. Simpson,' he cried; 'I shall otherwise be obliged to---you know what---' and he pointed to a horse-whip, which hung over the fire-place.

This had some effect, though it did not quite exhaust her passion. She stood with her hands on her lips, and with a sneer on her countenance, proceeded--- 'You're a pretty gentleman, sitting so easy by the fire, with a pipe in your mouth, and a-puffing out the smoke, as though you had nothing in the whole warsal world to think of. And there goes that neat article, Richard Jarvis, (pointing to a tall young man passing by the window), and that makes the hussy blush; and well she may, that her father should encourage such a lazy, good-for-nothing 'scape-gallows as a lover.'

'I'm sure, he's a very pleasant, sober, and good-natured young man,' replied Mary.----'And what's more,' added her father, 'very well to do; so don't let us hear any thing against Richard Jarvis, Mrs. Simpson.'

'A glass of negus!' roared some one from above.

'Coming, sir! coming!' exclaimed our hostess, and with these words she bustled out of the room. She had scarcely departed, ere Richard entered; walking up to the fire-place and taking a seat, he requested the landlord would fetch him a glass of brandy and hot water; but what was more singular, (considering that in general he was very attentive), he seemed to take no notice of Mary: and was, withal, in such a pensive mood, that she could not help asking if he were unwell

'No,' he replied, 'I'm in good health; and how are you, Mary?---you look well;' and then again relaxed into his former mood.

'Have you been at work to-day, Richard?' she asked. 'Work! work!' he replied, starting back, and looking at her keenly. 'Oh, no!---that is---yes, I have been working a little.'

'Richard, you don't seem as you used;' she continued: 'has any thing happened?'

'Oh,---no, no, merely I have a head-ache, and that makes me low'

After a little more discourse of the like nature, the host brought in his beverage, and set it before him; soon after which, in came Mrs. Simpson.

'So 'tis you, Mr. Richard, is it?' cried our hostess: 'and you've come, if I guess right, to leer after my daughter; but I'd have you to know, Mr. Richard —— (Oh! he's got summit to drink, thought she), and so 'twas. And, Mr. Richard, you're looking the very picture of health, this cold, cloudy day; and what d'ye think of the weather, man? won't it rain before night?---About four o'clock this morning I looked out of my window, and the storm was driving at such a rate. I think we shall have it very boisterous, by-and-by.'

'So I hope,' muttered a voice.

'Who was it that spoke?' asked all but Richard. The young man stared; it was he who had spoken, though the words had slipped from him unawares.

The clock now sounded two, upon which he started

up, and, desiring to be trusted for what he had drunk, departed.

No sooner was his back turned, ere the landlady exclaimed, 'There he goes, and a bag of unmanly bones it is too; and to have the impudence to come courting my daughter, just a veil to run up a score: but if I sets any thing down for him again, even to the value of a sixpence, I'll be d——d!' smacking her hands, and going up to the bellows, on which she began chalking.---And for that glass of brandy and water, in lieu of a shilling, which I charge other folks, I'll make him pay me eighteen-pence, a varlet.'

Mrs. Simpson's predictions fell out to a letter. Two hours scarcely elapsed ere the clouds burst, the wind began to rise, and the country, as seen from the windows adjacent, seemed wrapped in a gloomy grey, whilst sheets of rain swept before every object.

The tempest continued with unabated fury till the night closed in; and our hostess, on whose fiery temper a storm had ever a very quenching effect, sat doleful by the fire-side, talking over troubles with her husband.

It was now, as the clock struck eight, that a tall, thin man, shrouded up in a cloak, tapped at the door of a cottage which stood on a barren heath, on entering he looked about, and perceived, seated at a table, with a small piece of candle and a bible before him, a young man of rather an agreeable aspect; whom, however, he addressed with 'Dick!---what's this I see?---reading, and a bible.---Wheugh? you're crazy! what do you do with a bible?'

'Faith, Tom!' replied the other, 'I begin not to like our project; and, as I am willing to encourage such a disposition, I even borrowed mother's bible, and have been reading ever since.'

'Lend it to me,---I'll throw it in the fire.---Up, man, up!---Where are the pistols?---Is the dagger sharpened?

'I tell you, Tom,' replied the other, 'I repent; let us give over our design.'

'Wheugh!---you a man, and waver! Have you not sworn---sworn by the firmness of friendship? and besides,---remember, my dear fellow, the cash,---Dick! the cash! Oh! what a magic in wealth, as says the song; and then we'll off to ———, and no one shall hear any thing of us afterwards: and we'll keep an inn with the money, far, far from this spot, and pass away the rest of our life in plenty.'

'But then ———'

'Now, none of your but thens; jump up, there's a good man, and fetch me down the pistols.---Hark! isn't that a horseman?—yes,—he's gone on, though; and now, let's lose no time, but despatch—'

'I tell you once more—' cried the other, but in a tone more wavering. 'And I tell you once more,' returned the first, 'that we've no time to throw away; and unless you desire to remain pennyless, go up stairs, and fetch down the pistols.'

'But,—' cried Richard.

'I will not hear you speak!' exclaimed the other. 'Let this put an end to the contest: if you do not choose to stand to your oath, as sworn on the point of a drawn dagger, I will pursue you for the debt you owe me; and if it be not paid me by the day specified —curse me! you go to jail.' Thus urged, (more from the threats of his companion than his own free will), he sped up the stair-case, and in a few moments brought down a brace of pistols, with powder and ball sufficient for five charges.

'Come, this is well!' exclaimed his companion, 'in half an hour Jones will pass by; and if we don't rob him of every shilling he's been gathering from his tenants—that's all—never say my name's Nicholls.'

With this intent they left the cottage, and bent their course towards the highway; and after waiting with some patience for upwards of half an hour, the 'squire, whom they designed to rob, rode by.

Mounted on a well-conditioned pony, the 'squire, little dreaming that any danger was nigh, trotted on in full mirth; for having dined with a member of the chase, and the bottle having been pretty freely pushed

about, the good gentleman's head was more strongly fortified with courage than usual.

Two men had no sooner appeared before him, stopped his horse, and presenting a pistol, each demanded his money, than with a few good round English oaths, he thundered out, 'Wounds! do the men think I've got the Bank of England about me!—Devil a shilling have I got, except half-a-guinea, which, if you particularly want, is at your service.'

'Come, come, 'squire!' cried the most resolute of the two, 'we wish to use no violence; but if the two hundred pounds you've been gathering from your tenants be not immediately laid at our feet—you know what—each of these pistols holds a slug.'

'What!' cried the 'squire, 'and I lose a good half of a whole quarter's rental!—noa—oil be domm'd if I do!'

'Sirrah!' cried the first robber, 'sirrah! mind what you utter!' at the same time nearing the pistol towards his throat. The 'squire became enraged, seized hold of the barrel, and in endeavouring to wrest it from the robber's hand, the trigger was by some means pushed backwards, and the bullet speeding down through his bones, entered the very centre of his heart, and killed him.

Tom and his companion despoiled him without loss of time, and then being perplexed about the disposal of the body, agreed to dig a large hole in the abbey-aisle, and bury it. Accordingly, driving the horse before

them they proceeded towards the wood which encompassed the abbey; and one of them, hieing to a hovel adjacent, procured a set of tools, and returned to his associate.

In the meanwhile, two weary, weather-drenched travellers, whose large embroidered military great coats bespoke their profession, stopped at the wheat-sheaf inn; and, alighting from their horses, were shown by old Simpson into a neat room, where there was a blazing fire, and a table ready for supper.

A large beef-steak was soon served up, and a jug of ale being added, our visitors soon made a hearty meal; and having still to ride some distance further, ordered a bowl of punch, resolving to arm themselves against the rigours of that severe evening.

Whilst they were making themselves merry over this beverage, one of them seizing hold of Mary's hand, insisted on her seating herself down and becoming one of the party. To this she very properly objected; but the mother being at the bar, the window of which looked into this room, and having some undefined notion of good accruing to her daughter (for the old

dame loved her child in the main, though accustomed to give her harsh treatment), good Mrs. Simpson insisted on her doing what the gentleman told her. Mary, therefore, with as good a grace as she could summon, sat down to table; and the gentleman filling her a glass, exhorted her to join in their merriment.

And first, one of them began with, 'Well, my sweet wench! curse me, but you're dev'lish handsome! how old may you be?'

'O! sir,' she cried, 'women never tell their own ages.'

'And that's true enough,' roared her mother, 'but other people may do it for them.—Now, I'll tell you, gentlemen, (leaning her elbows over the bar-window), that strapping wench,—who would have thought it? but a few years ago, she was the littlest bit of a wee-wee thing that ever you set eyes on; that girl first saw light eighteen years agone, come next Michaelmas-day; because as a token, we had roast goose for dinner, and a fine one it was too;—and the 'squire came in for his quarter's rent, and he must needs sit down;—and so the joke was, which was the biggest, my daughter Mary or the goose, and the 'squire was for having her laid in a dish garnished with *ould* clouts, and so placed her upon the table; and rare fun we had on it too, I promise you.'

'And lest you should talk yourself dry, good Mrs. Simpson,' cried one of the strangers, 'be so good as to empty this glass of punch.'

'With all my heart, sirs,' replied the lady, 'and much do I think myself honoured.—"Well, but I was going to say, you never saw, from her earliest years, what a spirit this Mary was; so different to other folk's children.—She never minded staying by herself in the dark; and would go into the surgeon's shop, where there was a real live skeleton, and never a bit *afeard*—whilst as for me, I never could pass by the place, but what, sirs, my body felt all over just as though it was a cold jelly. 'Tis true, indeed; and then there—she'll walk you round the abbey of a moon-light night, when the spirits and the goblins are bobbing about, some in white sheets, and others trailing a long black coffin behind 'em, for

all the world like a snail does his shell; and which my husband has often seen, and divers other *sponsible* people in this village; and yet, devil a bit does she care; —she'll wander about for an hour together, and then she'll come home with a handful of wild flowers, which I'll be afeard to smell, for fear of some little ghosty hid in the cup, which, when I bring it near my nose, may bob up my nostril.'

'And does she so little mind walking near this abbey,' cried one of the strangers, 'concerning which spot I have heard such strange relations?'

'Marry, sir!—just try the wench,' cried her mother. 'Bid her go gather a flower or two, and then bring them back: I'll be bound, sir, you won't find her *afeard*.'

'What say you, my pretty lass,' says one of the gentlemen, 'will you convince us now you have this spirit?'

'Will she?' cried her mother, 'she shall, if you wish it; it isn't as she wills, it's as I choose to order her. Come, Mary, get yourself ready; go, and get your bonnet, and you may have my *ould* hood, if you like it; and if you think you shall get your feet wet, you may have my pattens also.'

Though Mary's temper was of that firm nature, that she seldom cared where she went, yet urged on against her inclination, and in a night so boisterous, she felt some reluctance at obeying her mother's order; but then remembering it would take her but a few minutes, for the abbey was not far off, she was somewhat relieved, and therefore prepared to set out with all expedition.

'Now,' says one of the strangers, 'there's an old yew tree grows near that abbey, and as there's not a tree of the like nature in the whole neighbourhood, if you bring me a twig thereof, I shall be convinced you have paid the place a visit; and that you may not go unprovided with a little artificial courage, come here, my girl, I'll fill you out a tumbler.' She however declined; but their kindness being of a nature rather boisterous, they made her drink near half a glass by the dint of

force, and then exhorting her to keep up her courage suffered her to depart.

The storm had now ceased; the clouds were beginning to break above; and a part of the moon becoming apparent, shed a pale silver light o'er the country round about.

Lightly stepped Mary over field, over stile, and coming to a wide spreading brook which was crossed by a narrow plank, passed over it.

She now entered the wood, the leaves rustled as she brushed along; all was deadly silence; and a branch catching her hood and bonnet, took them completely off, and, for a time, somewhat alarmed her. Still there was a deadliness about the place, especially as she approached near the abbey, which she had not at any other time observed;—was it her fancy, or were her feelings ominous?—she knew not, and little feared, for her heart was virtuous, and her conscience upbraided her with nought. At length she caught a view of the abbey; it was an old ruined building, and reared up its mouldering walls amidst bushes of ivy.

Thank God! thought she, my purpose is almost accomplished; I already see the yew tree, and it is but a few steps more, and—hark!—ha!—was that a voice? Good heavens! I hear it again;—sinking!—sinking—sinking:—now 'tis a whisper:—hush—hush.—Was it my fancy? No! no, it seemed to proceed from the abbey.—There, again!—hark!

She leaned her ear attentively, and in a state of the greatest trepidation, approached with a light foot. Still she heard this strange whispering, and stopping short, her breath became so frequent, and her fears gathered so fast, that she could hardly manage to stand.

If, thought she, there really should be sprites, and if they should assemble in this lone abbey to perform those nocturnal revels—and yet, I know not how to believe it.—Ha!—there, again! Oh, heaven! I almost sink to hear it. What, if I make a desperate push; the tree is hardly five steps from me, and if I can but once seize a branch—

Without debating any further, she rushed forwards,

and had just seized hold of a branch, when the head of a man was thrust out of a window of the abbey, and after remaining for a moment or two, again disappeared.

Her first feelings on seeing the head, were those of fear; and so far did these overcome, that she sank to the earth, and would have uttered a shriek, had she possessed breath enough remaining.

On becoming however somewhat recovered, she thought to herself, 'surely that head was human; and if there be men in that abbey, I am sure they are there for no good purpose.'

Assuming a little courage, she crept nearer and nearer the abbey, until she reached the window, and then raising her head suddenly, and looking within, she saw two men on the point of taking up a dead body, and laying it, dressed as it was, in a grave. She gave an involuntary shriek, with an 'Oh, my God!' which so alarmed the guilty fears of the murderers, that they let go the body, and taking to their heels, ran out of the abbey, and disappeared; but she observed that, in the hurry, one left his hat behind him; and being determined to bring this mystery to light, she walked carefully into the abbey, seized the covering, and leaving the spot, departed towards home with as much speed as she could summon.

She entered the parlour; the strangers still sat by the fire, and her mother and father were giving them a relation of one of Mary's early deeds. 'But, here she is!' cried her father. 'Well, Mary, my love; what luck? how did you fare with the *ghostis*, and where's the branch?'

'What, my brave girl,' cried one of the strangers, 'how now; are you ill?'

'Lord, Lord! as sure as I've a head on my shoulders,' cried her mother, 'she's seen a sprite. Why, Mary—What's the girl staring at? and who in the name of —— Lord, she's got a hat! what's been the matter, Mary? Come, my girl, out with it.'

'Mother!' she exclaimed. 'Father! Mother! Sirs! Sirs!—there's been murder committed.—Murder in the abbey, and the dead body lies there still.' She then,

in a broken manner, delivered an account of her adventure; and concluded, by adding, 'I observed a man's hat upon the ground, and knowing it to belong to one of the murderers, I brought it home with me.'

'Who entered the room there?' cried the landlady, turning round suddenly.

'Oh, 'tis me,' cried a voice; 'Richard Jarvis; I'm only come to see how Mary does.'

'Oh, Richard!' cried Mary, 'I've met with such, such a strange adventure. But here, come here; you shall see a murderer brought to light,—for here I have his hat, and his name is—(she looked into the hat, and all pressed anxiously round), bring that candle nearer,' she continued, 'and his name is—Richard Jarvis. Gracious God! support me! Richard Jarvis!' She fell fainting to the earth, whilst Richard Jarvis, whose first

attempt was to fly out of the room, was secured by the two strangers; and the landlord procuring a rope from the bar, the unfortunate culprit desisted from all opposition, and submitted himself to be bound.

Suffice it to say, that in less than two months the assizes came on; when Richard Jarvis being put upon his trial, the only witness that appeared against him was Mary. Her evidence, however, though conclusive, was delivered in a manner, which fully showed how

painful were the struggles that her mind was enduring. Her love of truth and dread of perjury, contested with a wish to save her lover's life, in the endangering of which she considered herself the sole and wanton instrument. When, however, she kissed the book, such a feeling of awe thrilled through her mind, with such a conviction that it was her bounden duty to speak the truth, and nothing but the truth, that subduing the weakness of her nature, by endeavouring to banish all endearing scenes from her memory, and suffering no suggestions to arise but those of duty and religion, she at length gave such convincing answers, that her lover was condemned to die, and his execution was fixed for that day three weeks. There was, however, one clause to this sentence, that if he chose to turn king's evidence, and give up the name of his companion, his punishment would be remitted. But from an inherent principle, which some may call honour, this he refused to do, and rather seemed to look towards death as a release, and prepared himself with all due piety and resignation.

During his confinement, Mary, by some means, contrived to procure an interview with him; a scene, excruciating to the feelings of both, ensued. On her entrance, he seemed disposed to treat her with contempt; he had been in hopes that she would have forsworn herself; but finding that her evidence had condemned him to the gallows, he had, for some time past, considered her in his own mind as no better than his murderer. But his scorn and indifference soon gave place to something like affection, when he beheld her weeping at his feet, and, in the agony of despair, heard her protest, that she would not outlive him a single hour.

At length the fatal day, when the law decreed that he should die, arrived. The morning was cloudy; the sun appeared not; and the busy hum of the multitude, proceeding towards the destined spot, was heard at an early hour—and heard too by Jarvis.

At eight o'clock, the culprit was taken from the cell; and being placed in a cart, was drawn to the field of execution, amidst thousands of spectators. His conduct

was exemplary; he paid great attention to the clergyman, and died in full faith.

But, during this, where was Mary? in vain she was searched for at home; and her father and mother, apprehensive of her despair, were fearful that she had put some violent end to her misery. Such, however, was not the case; she had been watched by a neighbour, and observed in the midst of the throng.

She walked on, with an eye fixed on her lover, a steady step, and an air of desperate resolution painted in her countenance. She uttered not a syllable during the time of his preparation; but no sooner did she see him hanging in the air, than she ran to the executioner. —'Wretch!' she exclaimed, 'hang me up too! I have been the cause of his death, and it is but meet that I should die!' These were her very words, as taken down by a bye-stander; but what afterwards occurred between her and the officer, no one has been able to learn. It is certain, however, that her brain was shortly after turned; for she laughed, cried, and shrieked alternately: beat her bosom in a cruel manner; and even danced exultingly round the gallows; uttering at the same time, the most incoherent expressions.

On her return home, she raved about in so violent a manner, that her parents found it needful to secure her with ropes; but in a few days this restraint became unnecessary, for her madness had fixed itself into a harmless sort of melancholy. It was, however, remarked, that the custom of the house dropped off very fast; whether it was, that Mary's charms had faded,—that she was no longer that attractive object we have formerly witnessed, or that people in general did not like to sit where a mad woman waited; certain it is, that another inn in the neighbourhood, from being very scantily attended, had now a superfluity of business, and rose by the other's fall. This sudden reverse had such an effect upon Simpson's mind, that it threw him into an illness, which cost him his life; and his widow, finding business growing worse and worse, contracted debts which she was not able to answer; and at length had the mortification to see her goods

exposed to public sale. The produce, however, falling short of the sum she owed, her inexorable creditors threw her into prison; where, having lingered in the greatest misery for several months, she was at length seized with the jail distemper, and removed from this life.

Meanwhile, her daughter, poor mad Mary, wandered up and down the village, subsisting on the charity of the well-disposed, though seldom without being accompanied by children at her heels; amongst whom she went by the title of Crazy Moll.

In a few months, however, she left these haunts for others of a wilder and more congenial nature. She was now in general seen amongst woods, or seated under the shade of a hedge or hay-rick; and very frequently sheltering herself for the night, in the barn of a farm-house. But in the summer months, her principal haunt was a common, where rushes grew in great abundance; these she used to gather, and plait into dinner mats; by which species of industry she would sometimes earn a few shillings. But her habits were now quite depraved; what money she procured, was all spent in drams, which she would drink to excess, and was frequently found in a state of stupor, which, but for the timely assistance of the person who discovered her, would have ended in eternal sleep.

But what an object was she become! instead of those fair blue eyes, which beamed benevolence, two dim withered balls, almost sunk into her head, glared frightful and vacant on the passenger. Her forehead, once so smooth and fair, was now covered with wrinkles; her cheeks were thin, hollow, and discoloured; and her neck and bosom scarred and sun-burnt; and her whole body in such a wasted condition, that the bones seemed ready to start through the skin. In lieu of that neat and comfortable dress which we have formerly described, she was now barely covered! a few dun-coloured, thread-bare rags, hung about her person, and scarcely served the ends of decency, much less of warmth.

One cold wintry morning, about eight o'clock, when the ground was covered with snow, a woodman, walking towards his work over a field belonging to one Farmer Baker, saw the body of a female sticking up to the waist in snow, and on approaching near to examine, found it to be poor Mary. She was quite dead, cold, stiff, and unsightly; her eye-balls glared frightful; and the under jaw having dropped, her mouth was filled full of drifted snow, and the tears upon her cheeks were frozen into globules of ice. Her right hand was clenched, and in its gripe was found a small piece of coarse brown bread, which, it was afterwards ascertained, was a portion of what had been given to her the night before. The body being dug up, was conveyed to the village workhouse, and buried at the expense of the parish. Thus terminated the existence of poor Mary, the Maid of the Inn.

MARY,

THE MAID OF THE INN.

BY DR. SOUTHEY.

Who is she, the poor maniac, whose wildly-fixed eyes
Seem a heart overcharg'd to express?
She weeps not, yet often and deeply she sighs;
She never complains—but her silence implies
The composure of settled distress.

No aid, no compassion, the maniac will seek,
Cold and hunger awake not her care;
Thro' the rags do the winds of the winter blow bleak
On her poor wither'd bosom, half bare, and her cheek
Has the deadly pale hue of despair.

Yet cheerful and happy (nor distant the day)
Poor Mary, the maniac, has been;
The trav'ller remembers, who journey'd this way,
No damsel so lovely, no damsel so gay,
As Mary, the Maid of the Inn.

Her cheerful address fill'd the guests with delight,
As she welcom'd them in with a smile:
Her heart was a stranger to childish affright,
And Mary would walk by the abbey at night,
When the wind whistled down the dark aisle.

She lov'd—and young Richard had settled the day,
And she hop'd to be happy for life;
But Richard was idle and worthless; and they

Who knew him would pity poor Mary, and say
That she was too good for his wife.

'Twas in autumn, and stormy and dark was the night,
And fast were the windows and door;
Two guests sat enjoying the fire that burnt bright,
And smoking in silence with tranquil delight,
They listened to hear the wind roar.

'Tis pleasant,' cried one, 'seated by the fire-side,
To hear the wind whistle without.'
'A fine night for the abbey,' his comrade replied,
'Methinks a man's courage would now be well tried,
Who should wander the ruins about.

'I myself, like a school-boy, should tremble to hear
The hoarse ivy shake over my head;
And could fancy I saw, half-persuaded by fear,
Some ugly old abbot's white spirit appear;
For this wind might awaken the dead.'

'I'll wager a dinner,' the other one cried,
'That Mary would venture there now;'
'Then wager and lose!' with a sneer he replied;
'I'll warrant she'd fancy a ghost by her side,
And faint if she saw a white cow

'Will Mary this charge on her courage allow?'
His companion exclaimed with a smile;
'I shall win; for I know she will venture there now,
And earn a new bonnet, by bringing a bough
From the alder that grows in the aisle.'

With fearless good humour did Mary comply,
And her way to the abbey she bent;
The night it was gloomy, the wind it was high,
And, as hollowly howling it swept through the sky,
She shiver'd with cold as she went.

O'er the path so well known still proceeded the maid,
Where the abbey rose dim on the sight;

Thro' the gateway she entered, she felt not afraid,
Yet the ruins were lonely and wild, and their shade
Seem'd to deepen the gloom of the night.

All around her was silent, save when the rude blast
Howl'd dismally round the old pile;
Over wood-cover'd fragments still fearless she pass'd,
And arriv'd at the innermost ruin at last,
Where the alder-tree grew in the aisle.

Well pleas'd did she reach it, and quickly drew near,
And hastily gather'd the bough;
When the sound of a voice seem'd to rise on her ear,
She paus'd, and she listened, all eager to hear,
And her heart panted fearfully now.

The wind blew, the hoarse ivy shook over her head:
She listened—nought else could she hear;
The wind ceas'd; her heart sunk in her bosom with dread,
For she heard in the ruins, distinctly, the tread
Of footsteps approaching her near.

Behind a wide column, half breathless with fear,
She crept to conceal herself there:
That instant the moon o'er a dark cloud shone clear,
And she saw in the moonlight two ruffians appear,
And between them a corpse did they bear.

Then Mary could feel her heart-blood curdled cold!
Again the rough wind hurried by:—
It blew off the hat of the one, and, behold!
Even close to the feet of poor Mary it roll'd:
She fell—and expected to die.

'Curse the hat,' he exclaims.—'Nay, come on, and first hide
The dead body,' his comrade replies.
She beheld them in safety pass on by her side,
She seizes the hat, fear her courage supplied,
And fast through the abbey she flies.

She ran with wild speed, she rushed in at the door,
She cast her eyes horribly round;
Her limbs could support their faint burden no more;
But exhausted and breathless she sank on the floor,
Unable to utter a sound.

Ere yet her pale lips could the story impart,
For a moment the hat met her view;
Her eyes from that object convulsively start——
For, O God! what cold horror thrill'd thro' her heart
When the name of her Richard she knew!

Where the old Abbey stands, on the common hard by
His gibbet is now to be seen;
Not far from the inn it engages the eye,
The traveller beholds it, and thinks, with a sigh,
Of poor Mary, the Maid of the Inn.